



FAMILIES

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THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD

What's it about?

Sir Robin of Locksley becomes an outcast after standing-up to the corrupt rule of Prince John. He takes refuge in Sherwood Forest, where he joins forces with a group of outlaws intent on defeating John and bringing peace to the land. Michael Curtiz's beloved Hollywood classic offers a defining cinematic version of the Robin Hood tale. Made over 85 years ago, this action-packed adventure remains a colourful, swashbuckling joy.

The making of 'The Adventures of Robin Hood'

There have been countless films made about Robin Hood, but this is the one that most people think of when the name 'Robin Hood' is mentioned. When Warner Brothers planned and produced it in the thirties, they put in everything possible to make it a success, but they could never have foreseen how long that success would last. One of the aims behind this production was to create something even better than the 1922 Robin Hood film made by Douglas Fairbanks, which was in its time the most expensive film ever made – and also one of the most popular. Warners, however, believed that they could eclipse it because they had two secret weapons that Fairbanks, though he made his only 16 years earlier, did not have. One was colour, the other sound.

There had been a sort of semi-Technicolor, based on red and green only, available for the previous ten years, but *The Adventures of Robin Hood* was one of the first feature films to be made in the full Technicolor system, which incorporated blue as well. To make good use of this new resource, the designers strove to find or create settings worthy of it. The banqueting halls, the green woodland, the towering castles, the brilliant uniforms, the shining armour – all these things were deliberately chosen because they looked good in Technicolor. For audiences in 1938, the flaming scarlets, vivid blues, startling yellows and strong greens were something they had never seen on screen before. Equal attention was paid to the soundtrack. Erich Korngold's music, which won an Oscar, incorporates variations on some old English songs, and encompasses moments of tenderness, scenes of broad comedy, rousing fanfares and music for battle. Non-musical sounds were likewise chosen and created with care. They included the whizz of arrows and the clash of blade on blade.

Much of this whizzing and clashing comes from Errol Flynn, who now seems absolutely right for the part. It therefore seems strange, looking back, to discover that he was not Warners' first choice to play Robin. Since they were spending so much money on the film they wanted a top name – which Flynn was not – in the starring role, and initially they intended that Robin should be played by James Cagney, even though he was known to the public mainly for gangster roles. Gradually Warners realised that Australian-born Flynn had several advantages over Cagney: Flynn had the right accent for the part, the right age (he was 29), the right physique, and the right skills (he could fence). Errol Flynn fought many duels in many films, but the longest and most spectacular remains his final encounter with Guy of Gisbourne in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*.

Terry Staples

The Adventures of Robin Hood

Directed by: Michael Curtiz, William Keighley

©/Production Company: Warner Bros.

In Charge of Production: Jack L. Warner

Dialogue Director: Irving Rapper

Original Screen Play by: Norman Reilly Raine,

Seton I. Miller

Photography by: Tony Gaudio, Sol Polito

Technicolor Photography: W. Howard Greene

Technicolor Colour Director: Natalie Kalmus

Film Editor: Ralph Dawson

Art Director: Carl Jules Weyl

Costumes by: Milo Anderson

Make-up Artist: Perc Westmore

Music by: Erich Korngold

Musical Director: Leo F. Forbstein

Orchestral Arrangements: Hugo Friedhofer

Sound by: C.A. Riggs

Cast:

Errol Flynn (*Robin Hood of Loxley*)

Olivia de Havilland (*Maid Marian*)

Basil Rathbone (*Sir Guy of Gisbourne*)

Claude Rains (*Prince John*)

Patric Knowles (*Will Scarlett*)

Eugene Pallette (*Friar Tuck*)

Alan Hale (*Little John*)

Melville Cooper (*High Sheriff of Nottingham*)

Ian Hunter (*King Richard the Lionheart*)

Una O'Connor (*Bess, Marian's maid*)

Herbert Mundin (*Much-the-Miller's son*)

Montagu Love (*Bishop of the Black Canons*)

Leonard Willey (*Sir Essex*)

Robert Noble (*Sir Raife*)

Kenneth Hunter (*Sir Mortimer*)

Robert Warwick (*Sir Geoffrey*)

Colin Kenny (*Sir Baldwin*)

Lester Matthews (*Sir Ivor*)

Harry Cording (*Dickon Malbete*)

Howard Hill (*captain of archers*)

Ivan F. Simpson (*Prim, owner of Kent Road Tavern*)

USA 1938©

102 mins

Digital

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